

HA delivers goodwill during holidays



Sgt. Angelo Tartaglia hands out toys to Kohi Safi children as part of a humanitarian aid relief effort Saturday.

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson
4th Public Affairs Detachment

KOHI SAFI, Afghanistan – Santa came a little late; however, he still came bearing gifts as Soldiers, members of the Army Material Command and U.S. Defense Contract Management Agency delivered humanitarian aid to villages in the Kohi Safi region of the Parwan Province Saturday.

The aid was a philanthropic gesture by citizens from the U.S. and part of the continuous commitment by the coalition forces to help stabilize and rejuvenate the Afghan communities surrounding Bagram Air Base.

“The previous commander saw the conditions of villages and the needs of the people, and wanted to help, so he asked his church back in the (U.S.) to start collecting donations and today is the harvest of his efforts,” said Navy Cmdr. Herb Byrns, commander of the DCMA in Afghanistan. “The donations by the (St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Sunnyvale, Ca.) illustrate the compassion and concern people in the U.S. have for the citizens here.”

Saturday’s humanitarian endeavor to the Kohi Safi region was two Army M939 5-ton tactical cargo trucks filled with food and two sport utility vehicles loaded with school supplies, blankets, clothing and what seemed to be the most enjoyable item of the aid for the village children – toys.

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Chief of Army Reserve discusses upcoming changes

Story by Sgt. Alex Delgado
and Spc. Gwen Holmes
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Chief of the Army Reserve Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly recently addressed Soldiers here at a town hall meeting to discuss recent and upcoming changes in the mission of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

The Army Reserve’s commander since 2002, Helmly conveyed the appreciation he and his staff have for Reserve and National Guard Soldiers.

“We honor their service,” Helmly said. “Soldiers are the foundation and the centerpiece of the Army, not equipment. (They are) led by a great chief of staff (Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker). He is making things significantly better for Soldiers.”

During his face-to-face meeting with the troops, Helmly expressed concern for Sol-

dier readiness and spoke about ways to better accomplish the Army Reserve and Army National Guard missions.

Improving the mobilization process for Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers is one of the general’s main goals. Helmly said the current mobilization process is too cumbersome and should be streamlined.

“Units are too worried about getting

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



U.S. Soldiers stand guard in Baghdad's Karada neighborhood Tuesday.

Al Qaeda videos found in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq – U.S. forces operating in the so-called Sunni Triangle – the region of Iraq most loyal to captured former dictator Saddam Hussein – found a significant weapons cache that included al Qaeda literature and videotapes, the U.S. military said Tuesday.

Members of Task Force Ironhorse 2nd Infantry's Arrowhead Brigade discovered the material Monday morning at a site in Samarra, about 65 miles north-northwest of Baghdad. Some of the items were found hidden in a false wall, the military said.

The troops also found a British-made body armor plate with a bullet hole. U.S. Central Command said it was an indication that insurgents were testing the ceramic plate's ability to withstand expended anti-personnel ammunition.

In addition to the al Qaeda literature and videos, the troops found nearly 8,000 rounds of ammunition; 160 mortar rounds and six mortar tubes; 43 rocket-propelled grenade launchers and 79 rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs); and 19 AK-47 assault rifles, as well as dozens of other weapons.

The military also said a significant amount of C4 and TNT explosives material was found, as was material to make improvised explosive devices – the crudely made bombs that have killed or maimed dozens of coalition troops.

That was just one of several large weapons caches uncovered in Iraq in the last two days.



JonBenet Ramsey

DNA submission could offer break in JonBenet case

DENVER – If the attorney for JonBenet Ramsey's family is right, the murder of the 6-year-old beauty queen could be solved by some faceless crime lab technician.

A male DNA sample that was found on JonBenet's underwear was submitted recently to an FBI database, said attorney Lin Wood, who called it a "dramatic development" that could clear John and Patsy Ramsey.

But experts are not so optimistic.

A suspect will be found from the DNA database only if he had been required to submit a DNA sample after being convicted of a violent felony, said Zack Gaskin, technical director of forensics for DNAPrint Genomics of Sarasota, Florida.

There was no immediate match, but Wood said new samples from criminals and crime scenes around the country are added daily.

Hamburg hospital gets car bomb alert from intel

BERLIN – Police increased security at a German military hospital in Hamburg after intelligence information warned of a car bombing plot against the hospital by suspected Islamic terrorists, Hamburg police said.

Police called the threat to the German Army's Wandsbek Hospital Tuesday "very serious" and shut off several streets around the building.

Hamburg police received the information from unidentified "security sources" at 2:30 p.m. (1330 GMT), a city police statement said.

It stated that authorities had "concrete indications of people who want to carry out attacks by means of a car bomb" on the facility,

in the suburb of Wandsbek.

"Those potentially involved are believed to be from an Islamic terrorist background," it added, without elaborating.

Hamburg's top security official, Dirk Nockemann was quoted by *The Associated Press* as saying that "an American intelligence agency" was the source of the tip, which he said pointed to Ansar al-Islam, a group based in northern Iraq that U.S. officials believe has links to al Qaeda.



A woman cries Tuesday during a relative's funeral in Bam.

Death toll rises to 28,000

BAM, Iran – With aftershocks rumbling through the region, the death toll in Bam has reached 28,000 from last week's earthquake, an official in the devastated Iranian city said Tuesday. The grim numbers came a day after the nation's top political and spiritual leaders visited the ancient city in southeastern Iran and promised to rebuild it.

"Relying on the cooperation and assistance of the Iranian nation, we will reconstruct Bam," Iranian President Mohammad Khatami said Monday, according to the state-run *Islamic Republic News Agency*.

"From now on, we all need to talk about life, and hand in hand, try to reconstruct the quake-stricken regions."

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, also inspected damage caused by Friday's 6.6-magnitude quake.

"I offer my condolences to all families, brothers and sisters who lost their loved ones in this catastrophe with all my heart," he said.

Khamenei urged all Iranians and groups to help, saying, "Aid should continue to come so that, God willing, it will be possible to rebuild the city of Bam better and this time stronger than before."

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"My office asked me what I wanted for Christmas and I said toys for the children here," said Kelli Sipple of DCMA. "It may sound corny, but that's truly what I wanted for Christmas. I want to help out and make a difference here the best way I can, and for Christmas I thought the best way to do that was to give toys to the children."

Sipple noted that her agency's Christmas present surpass her expectations when she received 300 toys in the mail.

Saturday's delivery was the third mission that involved DCMA contributions. The two previous missions saw the agency delivering more than 6,000 pounds of goods such as school supplies, clothing, blankets and kitchen aid.

Along with delivering the humanitarian relief Bagram officials were afforded the opportunity to speak in depth with a Kohi Safi region representative about issues and concerns of the villages.

"The people of Kohi Safi want to help the coalition force succeed," said Gul Zamon, representative for the Kohi Safi region. "We understand that it is the (coalition) that is helping to liberate Afghanistan, so we want to help anyway we can."

In the discussion, Zamon and Bagram officials spoke about build-

ing schools in the Kohi Safi region, the need for a health clinic and possible jobs for village males.

Zamon stated that the region desperately needs a health clinic because it is difficult for villagers to get to Kabul, where the nearest clinic available.

"Five percent of the women here die giving birth due to birth complications," said Zamon. "By the time they get to Kabul it is too late."

Bagram officials responded by saying that they would assess the possibility of having a medical assistance team visit the village once a month, and that the plans for building a school and health clinic were being evaluated.

The group closed their discussion with the talk of Bagram security forces spending an overnight visit in the one of the region's villages to get a better understating of the problems facing the communities and to get a better security perspective of the Kohi Safi region.

"We are dedicated to helping the villages," said Maj. David Long, officer in charge for Bagram's Base Operations Civil Affairs office. "Our efforts are a continuous commitment from the U.S.(and coalition forces)."

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ready for the mobilization and not about the mission," Helmly said. "I don't want (Soldiers) to worry about mobilization. I want (them) to be ready to accomplish the mission."

The increase in operational-tempo for the Army Reserve and Army National Guard has exposed shortages in some Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). For example, Helmly said there is currently a shortage of Soldiers trained in the skills of military police. To counter this problem, the Army Reserve and Army National Guard are starting new units and, in some cases, converting existing units to relieve some of the stress on military police units that have faced heavy deployment in the last two years. Helmly believes this strategy should lead to fewer back-to-back deployments.

Equipment shortages have also been a problem for Army Reserve and Army National Guard units. Helmly said Soldiers in both Afghanistan and Iraq are being deployed with equipment either outdated or not needed for their mission. To rectify this problem, Helmly said Army Reserve and Army National Guard units' Modified Table of Organizational Equipment (MTOE) are being adapted to include M-4 Carbine assault weapons and other essential equipment



Photo by Sgt. Alex Delgado

Chief of the Army Reserve Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly addresses Soldiers at a town hall meeting on his recent visit to Bagram Air Base.

to increase and improve their mission capabilities.

He said production of ballistic plates for the individual body armor vest has been increased to meet demand. Helmly said all forces on the ground would be supplied with these plates no later than February for Soldiers in Iraq, and no later than April for Soldiers in Afghanistan.

Mission readiness also relies on the ability to retain quality, qualified Soldiers according to Helmly. Each year approximately 46,000 enlisted Soldiers who leave active-duty are eligible for service in the Army Re-

serve and Army National Guard. Of that number, about one-third or an estimated 18,000 Soldiers actually transfer to the Army Reserve or Army National Guard.

Last year 16,000 officers eligible to transfer into the Army Reserve or National Guard left active duty and were not offered incentives to transfer.

Currently, there were no incentives in place to entice these Soldiers to join either service.

Retirement benefits for Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers are also in the process of being changed according to Helmly. Among the changes being proposed is the lowering of the minimum age to receive retirement benefits from 60 to 55 in hopes of enticing more Soldiers to stay in the service for up to 30-years. As a result, unit readiness should improve and experienced senior leaders would not be lost.

Helmly is scheduled to meet with key officials in Washington to address these and other issues on behalf of Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers.

With the ever increasing dependence on incorporating reserve force soldiers into supporting combat operations and helping to support nations' reconstruction efforts, addressing concerns of Soldiers in the field and showing support from above were two tasks General Helmly embraced during his visit to Afghanistan.

DoD announces military commission review panel

Story by Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Trials of detainees accused of terrorist acts came a step closer today, following three moves announced by senior Pentagon officials.

The Defense Department announced the selection of key personnel associated with military commissions and the issuance of a new instruction that creates a Military Commission Review Panel.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has designated four people to serve on the panel. They are: Griffin B. Bell, U.S. Attorney General under President Carter; Edward G. Biester, a judge with the Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County, Pa.; William T. Coleman Jr., a former Transportation secretary; and Frank Williams, the chief justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

The men will serve for two-year terms, and will be commissioned as Army major generals during their terms.

Officials also released the instruction governing the board. Under the instruction, panel members will review the military commission proceedings. "The panel may consider written and oral arguments by the defense, the prosecution and the government of the nation of which the accused is a citizen," said a senior defense official. "If the review panel finds that a material error of law has occurred, the review panel will return the case for further proceedings, which may include dismissal of charges."

The panel may make recommendations to the defense secretary, including in sentencing matters. Written opinions of the review panel will be published, officials said. The results of all military commission trials will automatically go to the review panel.

Establishing the panel should go a long way to allaying fears that many critics have that the process does not have enough safeguards, officials said.

On July 3, President Bush determined that six enemy combatants are subject to the military commissions. Two of those detainees have received defense counsels.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

"Legally Blonde"

1530Z at the MWR building:

When a blonde sorority queen is dumped by her boyfriend, she decides to follow him to law school to get him back and, once there, learns she has more legal savvy than she ever imagined.



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Thursday
<u>Uzbekistan:</u>	Light Snow H: 39F L: 18F	Cloudy H: 36F L: 15F
<u>Bagram:</u>	Mostly Cloudy H: 48F L: 23F	Light Snow H: 37F L: 18F
<u>Kabul:</u>	Mostly Cloudy H: 46F L: 21F	Light Snow H: 36F L: 16F
<u>Kandahar:</u>	Dusty H: 55F L: 36F	Dusty H: 54F L: 32F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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CJTF-180 Commander —
Brig. Gen. (P) Lloyd J. Austin III
CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —
Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey
Public Affairs Officer —
Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty
Public Affairs Sergeant Major —
Master Sgt. Sharon Opeka

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Commander — Maj. Matthew L. Garner
NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson
Editor — Sgt. Stephanie Hall
Journalists — Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson,
Sgt. Gregory Heath, Spc. Kelly Hunt

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)

Steve Spurrier resigns as Skins' coach

WASHINGTON — Steve Spurrier resigned as head coach of the Washington Redskins on Tuesday, ending a failed attempt to bring his Fun 'n' Gun offense to the NFL.

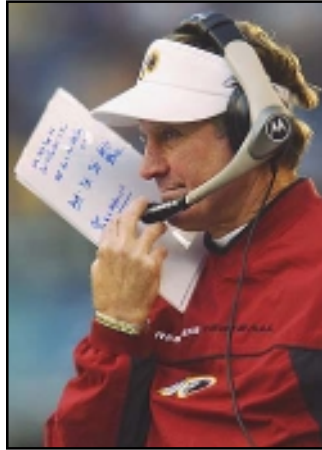
"This is a very demanding job," Spurrier said in a statement released by the team. "It's a long grind and I feel that after 20 years as a head coach, there are other things that I need to do."

Spurrier quit three days after the Redskins finished 5-11 by losing 10 of their last 12 games. Spurrier's record was 12-20 over two seasons.

"I simply believe that this is the right time for me to move on, because this team needs new leadership. ... I've enjoyed my time in Washington. Obviously, all of the losing can wear you down, but I believe that the franchise is headed in the right direction," the coach said.

Spurrier confirmed his resignation after two hours of confusion during which he told a newspaper he hadn't quit — even though the team announced that he did. Spurrier was not aware that final details already were worked out between his agent and the team.

"We had a little miscommunication there," Spurrier told *The Associated Press*.



Steve Spurrier

Nebraska football waits for new coach

SAN ANTONIO — Now it's Steve Pederson's move.

Bo Pelini said Tuesday the Nebraska football program is essentially shut down pending the naming of a new head coach, and it is Pederson who has been conducting a one-man search to replace Frank Solich.

Pederson fired Solich on Nov. 29.

Pelini and his fellow Cornhusker assistants are in limbo after fulfilling their responsibilities of preparing Nebraska for Monday night's Alamo Bowl.

"They are all pretty much unemployed now," Pelini said Tuesday.

As interim head coach, Pelini led the No. 22 Huskers to a 17-3 win over Michigan State in the bowl game. He did not rule out looking for another job now that the bowl game is over.

Pelini said he had not talked to Pederson since immediately after the game, and that was only a brief encounter.

"He shook my hand and said nice job," Pelini said.

When Pederson named Pelini interim head coach, he said Pelini would serve through the bowl game.

"I've got to make sure my family is taken care of," Pelini said.

Pelini also said he was not in negotiations with Pederson and that he had been given no indication when the search for a new coach would end.

Blazers finally get first away win

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. —

As the ball rolled upcourt and final horn sounded, smiles appeared on the faces of a couple of Portland Trail Blazers.

Winning on the road was sweet — especially after losing the first 10 games away from home.

The Trail Blazers became the last NBA team to win on the road this season, using their defense and rebounding in the fourth quarter to defeat the New Jersey Nets 91-87 Monday night.

"We needed this real bad," Jeff McInnis said. "It was a desperate game. We knew it was a big game. It was crucial for our team. We really focused in tonight and said we're going to get this win."

Rasheed Wallace scored 16 points, Zach Randolph had 14 points and 13 rebounds, and McInnis added 13 for Portland, which outrebounded the Nets 44-28 in beating New Jersey for the second time this season.



Kaniel Dickens was pressed into action due to Dale Davis' injury and made both his shot attempts.

Govt. bans herbal supplement ephedra

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration is banning the sale of ephedra early next year and urged consumers Tuesday to immediately stop using the herbal stimulant linked to the death of Baltimore Orioles pitcher Steve Bechler.

Ephedra has been blamed for 155 deaths and dozens of heart attacks and strokes, and the NFL, NCAA and International Olympic Committee banned its use. Major League Baseball did not.

The government's first ban on a dietary supplement comes eight years after the Food and Drug Administration began receiving reports that ephedra could be dangerous.

"The time to stop taking these products is now," Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said. "They are simply too risky to be used."

Ephedra once was hugely popular for weight loss and body building. But it can cause life-threatening side effects even in seemingly healthy people who use the recommended doses, because the amphetamine-like stimulant speeds heart rate and constricts blood vessels. It is particularly risky for anyone with heart disease or high blood pressure or people engaging in strenuous exercise.

The ban isn't immediate because federal rules require certain paperwork steps that mean the earliest it could take effect would be March. But the FDA wrote 62 current and former manufacturers on Tuesday that, "we intend to shut you down," said Commissioner Mark McClellan.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

U.S. Captures 100 fighters on Afghan-Pakistani border, Associated Press says

(Bloomberg) – A U.S.-led operation to flush out al Qaeda and Taliban fighters from Afghanistan's border with Pakistan has ended after four weeks, with the capture of more than 100 suspects and the deaths of 10, *The Associated Press* said, citing the U.S. Army.

Two Afghan soldiers were killed during Operation Avalanche, which wound up yesterday, *AP* cited Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty as saying.

There were no other fatalities in the 2,000- strong U.S.-led force, he said. The start of the operation was marred by the deaths of 15 children in raids on suspected militants, *AP* said.

"Most important is what didn't happen," *AP* cited Hilferty as saying at a news conference. The operation, in the south and east of Afghanistan, followed attacks on aid workers and U.S. soldiers in the border areas.

Hilferty said attacks had slowed, enabling troops to reopen a highway to the south, *AP* said.

Operation Avalanche was designed in part to keep anti-coalition fighters on the defensive during the meeting of Afghanistan's Loya Jirga, a convention to decide on a new constitution that started two weeks ago, *AFP* said.

India gives trucks to new Afghan army

KABUL, Afghanistan (*AFP*) – India on Tuesday donated 300 military vehicles to Afghanistan's fledgling national army to help it in its struggle against the militants launching regular attacks on troops.

The delivery came a day after five Afghan National Army troops were killed and three others wounded in an attack by militants in the southern border town of Spin Boldak.

The donation of military trucks, jeeps and ambulances is part of New Delhi's contribution to rebuild the army, Indian ambassador Vivek Katju said during a handover ceremony at the presidential palace in Kabul.

"We are committed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan; this is part of our support which is going on," he said.

Afghan officials said they appreciated the help from India, which has been rebuilding its ties with Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

"The two countries have been good friends throughout history," said Gen. Bismullah Khan, chief of staff at the defence ministry.

"Not only for this donation but I also thank the Indian government for their help and support during our resistance against terrorism," Khan said.

He was referring to New Delhi's support for the Northern Alliance during its fight against the Taliban, which was supported by Pakistan until the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks pushed Islamabad into making a U-turn and joining the U.S.-led war on terror.

Voting close on post-Taliban constitution

KABUL, Afghanistan (*AP*) – Afghanistan's grand council is nearing a vote on a post-Taliban constitution.

After more than two weeks of debate, most of the 502 delegates to the council, or loya jirga, appear to support U.S.-backed President Hamid Karzai's call for a strongly centralized government.

But opponents are still pressing to award parliament enough powers to keep the president in check, and for a stronger role for Islam.

Karzai argues a powerful presidency is the only way to hold the country together as it recovers from more than two decades of fighting. Others argue such powers could lead to a dictatorship.

A compromise draft unveiled Sunday forces the president to consult parliament on all major policies and seek its approval on key appointments.

A vote to ratify the constitution could come later this week.



Laugh Support